



DAVIS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Mailing Address:
PO Box 618
Farmington, Utah 84025

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Contact:
Bob Ballew
Public Information Officer
Office: (801) 525-5175
Cell: (801) 510-5710

Administration

Lewis R. Garrett, M.P.H.
Director of Health
22 South State Street
Clearfield, UT 84015

Environmental Health Services Division

David W. Spence,
M.B.A., E.H.S.
Associate Director
22 South State Street
Clearfield, UT 84015

Family Health & Senior Services Division

Sally Kershnik,
R.N., M.P.A.
Associate Director
22 South State Street
Clearfield, UT 84015

Communicable Disease & Epidemiology Division

Brian E. Hatch,
M.P.H., E.H.S.
Associate Director
22 South State Street
Clearfield, UT 84015

Pertussis Cases Increase In Davis County

(Clearfield, Utah) – An unusually high number of pertussis reports of school-aged adolescents have been received in the past few weeks by the Davis County Health Department. According to a recent “Health Update” sent by the department’s Communicable Disease & Epidemiology Division to local health care providers, increases in cases and school outbreaks also have been reported in several other areas of the state including Weber and Salt Lake counties. Department officials encourage health care providers in Davis County to maintain a heightened level of suspicion of pertussis in patients with cough-related illnesses.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says pertussis – also known as whooping cough – is a highly contagious respiratory disease. “Pertussis is known for uncontrollable, violent coughing which often makes it hard to breathe,” CDC’s website says. “After fits of many coughs, someone with pertussis often needs to take deep breathes which result in a “whooping” sound. Pertussis most commonly affects infants and young children and can be fatal, especially in babies less than 1 year of age.”

Brian Hatch, epidemiologist for the county health department said, “Symptoms of pertussis include cough, congestion, and fever with progression to a severe cough which may include vomiting/gagging after the cough spells. Consult with your physician for testing and treatment if you are displaying symptoms of pertussis.”

If someone already has pertussis, antibiotics are most effective when given early in the illness, he said

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“If ill, stay home from work, school and other public gatherings to help prevent the spread of the illness,” said Hatch. Good hygienic practices such as hand-washing and covering your mouth when coughing and sneezing are especially important, he said.

Vaccination is the best way to prevent pertussis. “The childhood vaccine is called DTaP, and the pertussis booster vaccine for adolescents and adults is called Tdap,” said Hatch.

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